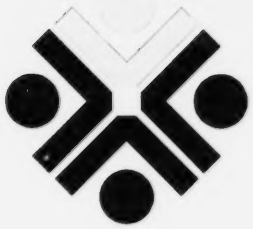

ELECTIONS BC
Province of British Columbia

SERVICE PLAN

2005/06 – 2007/08

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Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication Data
Elections BC.
Service plan. -- 2002/03/2004/05-

Annual.
ISSN 1710-4874 = Service plan (Elections British Columbia)

1. Elections BC - Periodicals. 2. Elections - British Columbia - Periodicals. I. Title. II. Title: Elections BC. Province of British Columbia service plan.

JL438.E43 353.4'8 C2004-960056-7

For more information on Elections BC
visit our website at
www.elections.bc.ca

Message from the Chief Electoral Officer

I am pleased to present the 2005/06 – 2007/08 Service Plan for Elections BC. This plan sets out our priorities and goals for the next three years. The plan also outlines the strategies and approaches we are taking to meet these goals, all aimed at furthering our vision of being leaders in electoral administration.

Elections are the legitimizing foundation of a functioning democracy. It is the responsibility of Elections BC to serve the people of British Columbia and give effect to their democratic rights, through fair and impartial administration of the electoral process.

At Elections BC we are committed to continuously improving how we administer the electoral process in British Columbia. Establishing clear goals, realistic objectives and meaningful performance measures guides our work and helps us ensure that organizational efforts stay focused on the results we want to achieve.

As this is being written, Elections BC is in the midst of completing the 38th provincial general election. We have also been administering a referendum on electoral reform in conjunction with the election. As of the initial vote count, it appears that an insufficient number of voters supported the BC-STV electoral system to meet the 'super majority' threshold required for the referendum to succeed.

Although the referendum did not pass, recent media reports indicate the leaders of political parties that will be represented in the Legislative Assembly support bringing the question of electoral reform forward for review by all members of the legislature.

Elections BC may need to revisit this Service Plan should the legislature decide to implement changes in how members are elected to the Legislative Assembly.

Harry Neufeld
Chief Electoral Officer
May 2005

Elections BC Overview and Core Business Areas

Elections BC is a non-partisan Office of the Legislature responsible for the fair and impartial administration of provincial elections and referenda, recalls and initiatives. Elections BC is the usual name for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. As a statutory Officer of the Legislature, the Chief Electoral Officer reports directly to the Legislative Assembly through the Speaker. The Chief Electoral Officer cannot be a member of a political party, make contributions to a party or candidate, or vote in provincial elections. For financial and administrative purposes, the organization is divided into four core business areas.

Event Administration

Elections BC must maintain a constant state of readiness for elections, by-elections, referenda, and recall and initiative campaigns. These events can occur at any time, often with overlapping time frames. During a provincial general election, Elections BC grows from a base of 30 employees to over 30,000 employees on General Voting Day. Though the dates of provincial general elections are now fixed, the Lieutenant Governor retains the prerogative to dissolve the Legislative Assembly at any time, thereby causing a general election.

Voter Registration and Electoral Geography

Voter registration and voters list maintenance are an important part of our day-to-day operations. Elections BC is continuously searching for more effective and efficient methods of ensuring the provincial voters list is maintained at high levels of coverage, currency and accuracy. This business area is also responsible for the maintenance of a geo-spatial database containing B.C.'s electoral boundaries, road network and address data, as well as providing a variety of services and products necessary for the administration of electoral events.

Public Awareness and Education

Elections BC provides a broad level of public education regarding voter registration and the electoral process. This includes ensuring the public, media, political parties and other stakeholder groups have access to a wide range of information, both between and during electoral events. The business area is responsible for developing a comprehensive communications strategy for each electoral event to ensure timely, effective and efficient communications with political parities, constituency associations, candidates, voters and other individuals and organizations, as required under the *Election Act* and *Recall and Initiative Act*.

Electoral Finance

This business area is responsible for the registration of political parties, constituency associations, advertising sponsors and other participants in the electoral process. Electoral Finance also reviews all financing reports required

to be filed by participants to ensure compliance with the *Election Act*, the *Recall and Initiative Act* and regulations under the *Referendum Act*. This includes conducting required periodic investigations of the financial affairs of registered political entities.

Resource Summary

The activities of Elections BC are driven by the legislation it administers and the associated actions of its clients. The timing of by-elections, recall and initiative petitions and other electoral events are not controlled by Elections BC. In consideration of the unpredictable nature of the work of the office, both the *Election Act* and the *Recall and Initiative Act* establish that all necessary expenses required for the administration of those Acts must be paid out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

The Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services recognizes that the budget needs of Elections BC are demand driven and has established a process whereby the Chief Electoral Officer advises the Chair of the Committee in writing when additional funds are required to administer electoral events. This process has been followed for all electoral events since 2002.

The following pages provide a summary of the financial and human resources available to Elections BC annually for on-going operations and purchases of capital assets. On-going operating costs do not include costs associated with the detailed planning, preparation and conduct of large scale electoral events, such as the pending electoral boundary redistribution.

Costs associated with the 2005 targeted enumeration, general election and referendum on electoral reform will be reported separately, as required by the *Election Act* for all electoral events. Additional funding requirements that may arise from these events are not reflected in this plan.

Resource Summary Table

ON-GOING OPERATING COSTS	2005/06 Planned $	2006/07 Planned $	2007/08 Planned $
Funding			
Core appropriation	6,508,000	6,508,000	6,508,000
Total funding	6,508,000	6,508,000	6,508,000
Expenses for on-going operating costs			
Salaries and benefits	2,140,240	2,368,084	2,240,025
Amortization	1,816,356	1,132,903	1,411,851
Building occupancy charges	363,360	370,640	378,050
Office expenses and telecommunications	226,260	352,640	262,870
Corporate information systems	915,080	1,051,439	1,053,180
District Electoral Officer stipends	23,700	48,350	49,320
Address and boundary maintenance	348,000	450,870	408,910
Investigations	25,000	55,000	26,020
Voters list maintenance	287,700	293,460	299,370
Political entity reporting	102,970	115,280	99,070
Officer salary and benefits	219,334	219,334	219,334
Voter education	40,000	50,000	60,000
Total expenses	6,508,000	6,508,000	6,508,000
On-going funding returned	-	-	-

CAPITAL ASSETS			
Funding			
Personal computer hardware and software	-	20,000	245,000
Mainframe/mini computer hardware and software	3,600,000	2,900,000	1,630,000
Office furniture and equipment	-	-	-
Tenant improvements	-	-	-
Total funding for capital assets	3,600,000	2,920,000	1,875,000
Expenditures for capital assets			
Personal computer hardware and software	-	20,000	245,000
Mainframe/mini computer hardware and software	3,600,000	2,900,000	1,630,000
Office furniture and equipment	-	-	-
Tenant improvements	-	-	-
Total expenditures for capital assets	3,600,000	2,920,000	1,875,000
Potential capital asset funding returned	-	-	-
Full time equivalents (FTEs)	30	30	30

Vision, Mission, Mandate and Goals

Vision

To be leaders in electoral administration

Mission

To serve the people of British Columbia, by giving effect to their democratic rights, through fair and impartial administration of the electoral process

Mandate

To administer the provincial electoral process in British Columbia in accordance with the *Election Act*, *Recall and Initiative Act*, *Referendum Act*, and *Constitutional Amendment Approval Act*

Goals

1. Excellence in impartial electoral administration
2. Public awareness and understanding of the electoral process
3. Ensuring the electoral process is accessible and inclusive

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Measures

The descriptions of Elections BC's goals, objectives and strategies in previous Service Plans have been substantially modified to better reflect the new organizational structure and future direction of Elections BC. Elections BC has identified three key goals:

- Excellence in impartial electoral administration
- Public awareness and understanding of the electoral process
- Ensuring the electoral process is accessible and inclusive.

On the following pages, each of Elections BC's goals, objectives and strategies to be achieved over the next three years are identified, with associated performance measures. Due to the small size of the on-going organization, all program areas must collaborate extensively to achieve these objectives and strategies.

Goal 1 – Excellence in impartial electoral administration

Objective 1 – Efficient, effective and impartial service to voters, candidates, and other clients.

Strategies:

- Share and learn from best practices of other electoral agencies
- Implement a comprehensive planning framework
- Advise clients of service standards
- Train Elections BC staff and election officials, with a focus on impartiality and service orientation
- Ensure accurate and current information is available to the public in a timely manner through a variety of sources (e.g. website, toll-free phone number, public information materials)
- Explore means to enhance and increase the number of channels available to assist clients

Measure	Base	Targets		
	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Implementation of new technology or procedures to streamline administration	Fully automated Internet voter registration implemented	Internet voter registration becomes primary method of registration, updates and confirmations	To be determined	To be determined
Number of access points available for client services	6	145	65	65

Notes
Elections BC is committed to continuous improvement of client services and the impartial administration of the electoral process. Providing services to clients in an equitable, timely, efficient and cost-effective manner enhances public confidence in the electoral process and leads to efficient use of resources. Targets for 2006/07 and 2007/08 are to be determined following a post event review of the 2005 General Election and Referendum on Electoral Reform.

An access point is a channel available to clients to access information or communicate with Elections BC. The number of access points increase in relation to voter activity and investment of resources and will decline between electoral events. In the period 2005/06 the number of access points increased significantly to reflect 85 district electoral offices established for the May 17, 2005 General Election.

Objective 2 – Produce a high quality voters list for use in electoral events

Strategies:

- Continue to explore ways to improve the quality of the voters list, both in terms of coverage and currency
- Increase awareness and usage of Online Voter Registration
- Research and implement new information sources and methods for voter registration and list maintenance

Measure	Base	Targets		
	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Percentage of eligible voters on voters list (coverage)	90%	92%	90%	88%
Percentage of voter records with correct current address (currency)	70%	87%	80%	78%
Notes Coverage and currency increase in relation to electoral events due to voter activity and investment of resources and may decline between electoral events.				

Goal 2 – Public awareness and understanding of the electoral process

Objective 1 – Citizens of British Columbia are informed and educated on the electoral process

Strategies:

- Issue school kits to all public and independent schools in B.C.
- Continuously work to improve kits and methods to educate youth about the electoral process
- Continuously improve the information available to the public about the electoral process in Elections BC's guides and website
- Provide voters with information about the electoral process through Elections BC's website, guides, flyers and advertising during an electoral event

Measure	Base	Targets		
	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Percentage of schools using grade 5 and grade 11 education kits	n/a	Baseline to be determined by survey	To be determined	To be determined
Percentage of education kit evaluation forms from teachers that are positive	98%	98%	98%	98%
Continuous improvement of information available to clients	n/a	Increase and improve quality of information available on website	To be determined	To be determined
Voter knowledge of the electoral process	n/a	Baseline to be determined by survey	n/a	n/a

Notes
Ensuring voters have the information they need to know about when, where and how to vote enhances accessibility, inclusivity and efficient administration of the electoral process.

Voter knowledge of the electoral process is to be determined by survey during an election period: the next general election is in 2009.

Goal 3 – Ensuring the electoral process is accessible and inclusive

Objective 1 – Identify barriers and implement measures to enhance the access and inclusivity of the electoral process

Strategies:

- Provide voter information in multiple languages
- Continue to improve access, information and voting tools for voters who are disabled, hearing impaired and visually impaired
- Continue to work with client groups to identify means to further improve access and inclusivity of the electoral process
- Ensure voting officials represent the diversity of voters and are trained on equity and diversity
- Continue to improve the quality of voting places and voting place locations selected for electoral events

Measure	Base	Targets		
	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Strategies implemented to mitigate identified barriers	n/a	All advance voting locations are wheel chair accessible	All guides assessed for plain language	To be determined
Percentage of eligible youth (18-24 years of age) registered as provincial voters	50%	65%	60%	58%

Notes
The level of resources and strategies directed to address barriers is related to electoral events and may decrease between events.

Coverage of eligible youth increases in relation to electoral events due to voter activity and investment of resources; this may decline between electoral events.

Appendix – Glossary of Terms

By-election	An election other than one conducted as part of a general election.
Enumeration	The registration of voters by residence-to-residence visitation or by another method directed or authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer.
General election	Elections called on the same date for all electoral districts in the province to elect all Members of the Legislative Assembly.
Initiative petition	A petition under the *Recall and Initiative Act* regarding the introduction of a proposed law in the Legislative Assembly.
Initiative vote	If the Select Standing Committee refers a successful initiative petition and draft Bill to the Chief Electoral Officer, the Chief Electoral Officer must hold an initiative vote under the *Recall and Initiative Act*.
Recall petition	A petition process under the *Recall and Initiative Act* to remove a Member of the Legislative Assembly from office between elections.
Referendum	If the Lieutenant Governor in Council considers that an expression of public opinion is desirable on any matter of public interest or concern, the Lieutenant Governor in Council may, by regulation, order that a referendum be conducted under the *Referendum Act*. A referendum is binding on the government that initiated it.
Voters list	The voters list is prepared and maintained by the Chief Electoral Officer, and contains the names and residential addresses of registered voters in each electoral district.
Voting area	An electoral district is divided into voting areas for the purpose of assigning voters to voting places. A voting area is generally a geographic area containing no more than 400 registered voters.